

In the Orchard

Minister's Easter Message

Dear OVU and Covenant Church Friends:

Wow! It's Easter already. Easter is what being Christian is all about. Easter is the joy and celebration of the Christ-life.

Hallelujah, meaning 'God be praised', is such a welcome refrain in our world these days. Each week since arriving, Sunday morning has been a Hallelujah day, praising God for allowing me to be here with you, worshipping together.

I am so looking forward to leading my first Sunrise Service on Easter morning and breaking out in our Hallelujahs. It's just one more 'first' for me here and I could not be happier. The season of spring itself is a first as well, and we have discovered that we have crocuses in our front yard. The trees and shrubs all around us that appeared to be dead just days ago

have sprung forth with new buds. To me, that means spring! That means new life! The earth is awakening once again.

Easter is all about the tomb. The stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty, and hearts are full. Jesus lives! Each Sunday is its own Easter and provides us an opportunity to look at the tombs we want to see empty in

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Minister's Easter Message cont.

our lives - tombs of anger, resentment, holding on to old grudges, tombs of duty and diligence and perfectionism. Each Sunday is an opportunity to get turned around and begin to emerge from those tombs that get in the way of real life and true living.

The church was packed last Sunday, and that tells us that we don't have to find have to find our way out of those tombs alone-- there's a whole church family ready to move the boulder aside for us, to unbind us and let us go, to help us to be the people we are truly meant to be. This

is the power of new life and of new beginnings that God gave to Jesus, and to us, that first Easter. We are a thanksgiving and resurrected people! It is the power of a faith community that has the ability to be the source of resurrection for what needs new life in each of us.

When I arrive at church each Sunday morning, it does not matter what worries I may have for the

service that day. Saturday night I might be concerned whether I have a good plan for the children's time, if I have a message that will inspire or move people providing joy and hope, or if I have picked the right hymns for that Sunday. But on Sunday morning, when I see your bright faces, and we share greetings and smiles, handshakes and hugs, those concerns vanish. It is



in the power of our faith community coming together that I am resurrected from that worry and see the stone rolled away.

It is my hope that this Easter season we will all get to experience the joy, hope, compassion and love that comes from this community/church family that welcomes, loves, and nurtures not only each other but also the greater community outside our doors. To take some scriptural liberties, let me close by saying, as you have done for me, do also for others. Love, hope and faith abide, and the greatest of these is love.

Rev. Don Sellsted

Happy Easter from the Chair

by Jane McDonald

You know it has been two years since I last filled the shoes of Chair of Council for Orchard Valley. We were in a much different place then. I remember my “Notes from the Chair” that I would write every few weeks. In some ways I hope they helped with coming to know ourselves during that time. I also remember the visits that I made to Wickwire Place to visit some of our seniors during that time. It was a wonderful time that I was able to spend with those funny and caring people. I learned so much from them.

Now, we have grown into a family that works together, shares together and cares together! I think we have come a long way. As we move forward there is still change happening around us. We have a new structure in the United Church of Canada nationally as well as regionally. There are many, even at the highest levels, still trying to figure out how we live and be the church within this new structure.

Within our congregation we have much to look forward to and to be excited about. Our programs seem to be running smoothly, we have made

some big decisions about our future home, and have a wonderful group of people working together to sort out what will best fill the needs of Orchard Valley in that home.

I want to take the time to thank each person that is working on our Facilities project. Each offers their skills to the task and we welcome their expertise. We also look forward to the results from our Search committee. Having an additional minister will allow us to support our congregation and Rev. Don as we move forward.

Rev. Don and Cheryl Sellsted are such welcome members to our church community. You are a blessing for us, and we are so glad that you chose Orchard Valley as your faith home.

In the short time we have been Orchard Valley, we have gone through times of sadness and hurt but we have come out the other side. We may not be fully there yet, but I feel that this time of Easter parallels well with our journey. Easter is a time of sadness and a time of rejoicing. As we move through this time of Lent let us think about the sacrifices that were made for us and let us rejoice in the resurrection!

The Butterfly - A Story of Patience

a story by Andy Pitter

"Mom, look at what I found!" I walked into the study as quickly as I could to my mom working at her computer. "I found it under the apple tree!"



She watched as I opened my hands to show her the little green object I was carefully cradling. "Is it a butterfly cocoon?" "Sort of. It's a chrysalis. Moths have cocoons; butterflies have chrysalises.

You can tell it is a chrysalis because it's hard and green. Cocoons are usually soft and white," she said.

"So there's a butterfly inside? Can we open it up to see it?"

"Oh no, we can't do that. The butterfly won't be ready," she replied.

"Well, when it IS ready, can we open the chrysalis?"

"It's better if we just let the butterfly do it," she told me.

"Well, what can we DO then?!" I cried, nearly stomping my feet.

"We can put it somewhere safe and watch it when it happens. We just have to be patient!" She tapped my nose and looked in my eyes sternly.

But she got up, found a yogurt container and put a piece of paper towel in it before telling me to put the chrysalis in it. Days passed. When we could see the wing patterns, we took the container outside and after waiting a while longer, we saw the butterfly emerge at last. Its wings were shrivelled up, but it climbed up the paper towel until it was upside down, then slowly, slowly it spread out its wings. We had to wait an hour after that before the butterfly flew off. It was amazing!

Some things take a lot of time but they are worth it in the end. (Inspired by Sue Monk Kidd's, *When the Heart Waits*)



Our New Music Group -- Orchard Valley Chimes

by Sylvia Jacquard

Our church has welcomed a new ensemble that contributes to the worship services - the Orchard Valley Chimes. Music director Ken Hassell set about recruiting for the new group in a most ingenious way: he asked for volunteers from the congregation at the beginning of the service to come to the front. He gave them a quick 2-minute lesson, and then those volunteers

showed everyone how easy it was to play the chimes and get a beautiful result.

Eleven members of the congregation carried through with the challenge, and were soon performing. Orchard Valley Chimes premiered at the annual Advent service at Kentville United Baptist, and have offered their gifts of music during three OVUC services. They are scheduled next to perform on May 5. "Ring Dem Chimes!"



Orchard Valley Chimes members Valerie Mosher, Dale MacArthur, Judy Gilmour, Kathryn Hare, Angela Whiteway, Carol Wooster and Andrea Purvis performed "There is a Balm in Gilead" at the 11 o'clock service on April 7th.

Searching for PT Community Development Minister

by Christina Macdonald

Based on the recommendation in the Joint Needs Assessment Committee 2018 report, the Orchard Valley congregation appointed a Search Committee in December 2018 to search for a part-time minister.

The Search Committee team includes Ken Hassell, Gary Dunfield, Alice Morse, Sarah Trask-Duggan, Heather Hennigar, Johanna Rosolen, and Christina Macdonald (chair). We have met with and received training from our Regional Council Liaison, Rev Anne Hoganson.

We have spent time considering how our biases are shaped by our power in society and in our church, as well as our calling to reflect God's radically inclusive love and justice. We have reviewed how human rights must be upheld throughout the pastoral relations process. We are now actively seeking applications and will soon begin reviewing the skills and gifts of potential candidates for the position of Part-time Minister of Community Development. We will keep the congregation apprised as we move toward our interview process.

Orchard Valley to Pursue Affirming Process

by Rev. Don Sellsted

We have decided to pursue the goal of becoming an officially Affirming Church. Why become an Affirming Ministry? Because Jesus' ministry included all who were excluded and the Gospel calls us to do the same! The LGBTQ+ community faces specific and deliberate rejection and shaming in places of worship. We need to be out, public, and proud to be fully present to our communities in all their diversity and struggles.

The goal of the Affirming process is for us to become a public, intentional,

explicit welcome for diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. During this process we will hear about stories and struggles. It's about people, not papers. It's a process of spirituality, reflection, and education. For this journey we formed a group to look at how to become more intentionally welcoming. We will engage with our congregation through education, storytelling, and prayer. We will explore our hopes and our fears. Ultimately, we will decide together as a congregation on whether to formally become Affirming.

Steeple Strummers Guitar Club Born From February Classes

by Dave Murphy

After several years of guitar lessons during OVUC's School for Fun in February, those attending expressed an interest in continuing to meet on a monthly basis. Thus the 'Steeple Strummers Guitar Club' was born.

At present, the club is open to any member of the congregation; however, it possibly will be open to the community. We gather to share music, talk about the artists and review tips/instruction from the February guitar classes. The group varies from 4-6 people in number.

This small group is very enthusiastic about learning the guitar and have a lot of respect for one another. As a result, no one feels intimidated or feels they have to get it right the first time. Individual practice, at home between club nights, is highly encouraged. This improves playing ability and builds confidence. Any trouble spots with technique or music are shared and time is taken to address them.

If playing guitar for fun and fellowship interests you then please join us the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. between September and June.



Dave Murphy, the teacher of the Guitar class that was part of the School for Fun in February, and three of his students: Wayne MacDonald, Peter Dekker and Bill Simpson. These four men and more are now the Steeple Strummers Guitar Club.

A First Look at the New Orchard Valley

by Harvey Gilmour

Good news was received by Orchard Valley when UCC Region 15 administrators advised us that our “phase one” planning steps were approved. These steps involve contracting for an environmental assessment of our land, accepting certain obligations that come with the acceptance of an offer of the gift of additional land for our expansion plans, and contracting for architectural and design services as well as legal counsel.

OVUC Trustees and the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee met together March 18 to review these and many other issues in the complex process of addressing congregational needs and ready ourselves for the years ahead.

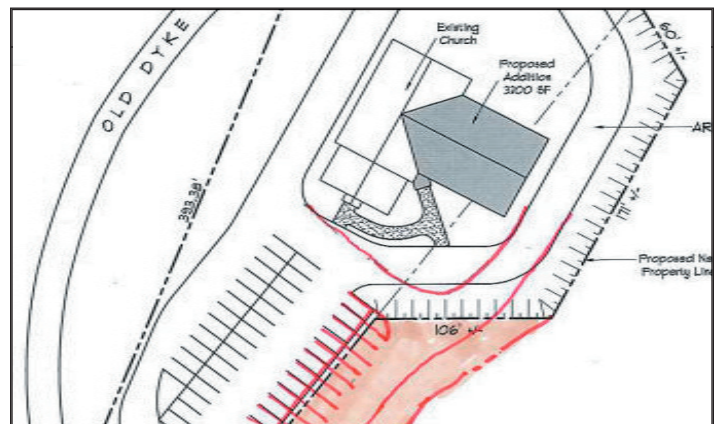
The present vision is to place priority on increased sanctuary capacity, Sunday school needs, choir support areas, kitchen/food service facilities, administrative and meeting space, bathroom upgrades and welcoming/reception space. Preliminary thinking is that all of this – and more – can be accommodated in an expansion in a south-easterly direction extending from the present sanctuary.

Trustees and the Facilities Committee will continue to meet on a regular

basis, as the funding of the project and land issues flow through Trustees’ responsibilities, while architecture and design, functionality and equipment fall under the mandate of the Facilities Committee. In many areas, these responsibilities overlap.

The Architectural Design team will undertake further consultation with Council and Committee representatives as appropriate to each area/step of the process.

We are all excited to get going and are cognizant of the fact that this is not a race--nor is it a marathon--but no doubt will require patience on all sides throughout. The Trustees and the Facilities Committee will keep the congregation informed of key steps as we move forward in the process.



The site plan shows a 3200 sq. foot addition on the southeast side of the existing church that will accommodate a 225 - 250 seat sanctuary.